



For Immediate Release  
Press Release

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### **36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Algiers Accords**

Today marks the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Algiers Accords on January 19, 1981. The United States remains profoundly grateful to Algeria for its mediation efforts that led to the release of 52 American diplomats held hostage in Iran.

On November 4, 1979, the American Embassy in Tehran was occupied by protestors, triggering the Tehran hostage crisis. In 1980-1981, Algeria mediated the crisis. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher shuttled between Algeria and Washington and finally reached a deal under which the hostages would be released in return for an unfreezing of Iranian assets and a lifting of sanctions. While Mr. Christopher was in Algiers, Villa Montfeld served as his headquarters. The signing of the Algiers Accords on January 19, 1981 by Deputy Secretary Christopher and Foreign Minister Mohammed Benyahia led to the release of the hostages and their arrival in Algiers on January 20, 1981. Before departing Algiers, Deputy Secretary Christopher signed and handed to Foreign Minister Benyahia the following note:

“Mr. Minister, I want to express to your President, to you and your colleagues, and to the Algerian people the deep gratitude and respect of the people of the United States for bringing us to this moment of profound relief that these fifty-two men and women and their families have emerged from the chasm of fear. You and your government have demonstrated an inspiring commitment to humane values, and have provided the world with a singular example of the art of diplomacy.”

For the important role that Villa Montfeld played in United States diplomatic history, in 2016 Secretary of State John Kerry added Villa Montfeld to the [Secretary's Register of Culturally Significant Property](#). The Register includes 33 U.S. government properties and is an honorific listing of important diplomatic buildings overseas that figure prominently in our country's international heritage.

Today, Villa Montfeld serves as the residence of the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria. To commemorate the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Algiers Accords and express the enduring gratitude of the U.S. government and the American people to Algeria, Ambassador Polaschik will host a luncheon at Villa Montfeld in honor of the Algerian diplomats who helped negotiate the agreement. For as Deputy Secretary Christopher recalled: “All in all, no one performed with more energy, skill, commitment, or honor than did the members of the Algerian team. It is a simple fact that the settlement could not have been achieved without them.”